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# Troubles Beset U.S. Embassy

## Marine Scandal Latest Blow to Moscow Staff

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MOSCOW, April 1—The revelation of security breaches by U.S. Marine guards is the latest blow to the embattled U.S. Embassy, which in the last 19 months has weathered storms over "spy dust," defecting spies, bugged typewriters and the abrupt withdrawal last October of almost 200 Soviet cleaners, drivers, repairmen and maids.

"It has been a helluva year," said one diplomat, reflecting the extent of official comment available this week from the embassy's 225 staff members. As one member said, they are "very touchy right now."

The new ambassador, Jack Matlock, arrives in Moscow Thursday, at the height of current anxieties. Arthur Hartman left in February after five years in the post.

Not only did the scandal break during the transition of ambassadors, it is unraveling as Secretary of State George P. Shultz prepares a visit later this month, at a critical moment in negotiations over an arms agreement.

Ensuring security has become a top priority as the embassy struggles to recoup from what has been described as the worst intelligence fiasco in decades.

Security is the thread that runs through virtually all of the troubles at the embassy in recent months, including the departure of the Soviet staff members last October.

Their replacement, at half the number and more than twice the cost by 80 to 90 Americans, now seems justified by the disclosures that American marines were involved with Soviet employees, one embassy official noted.

"Given the tremendous focus on security issues, I don't think it matters how much it costs," the official noted. "The big story is security and [the Soviet staff] is part of that story."

Although the Soviet government ordered the withdrawal of its citizens as a response to the expulsion of 55 Soviet diplomats from Wash-

ington, the embassy had already begun to move toward the gradual reduction of Soviet employees. This was a response to pressure from congressmen concerned about security risks.

The role of Violetta Seina, the Soviet translator reputed to have had an affair with Sgt. Clayton Lonetree, 25, the key figure in the current scandal, has reinforced the point. Lonetree, at Seina's behest, is accused of having allowed Soviets into sensitive areas of the embassy, including the "bubble" room that was supposed to have been secured against listening devices.

The working area can be entered only from the ninth floor. It is guarded by a marine who checks all visitors.

The suddenness of the Soviets' departure last October put unexpected strains on the Americans stationed here who, regardless of rank, had to take turns on "all-purpose duty," which meant everything from cleaning the courtyard to washing out the bathrooms.

The exceptions were the 28 marines.

"It reflects the importance placed on the work they have to do," said one embassy official. "It was felt the duties they perform come first."

The disclosures about the Marine scandal also come at a time when a new U.S. chancery, not yet completed, is plagued by problems.

A special commission, headed by former U.S. defense secretary James R. Schlesinger, is due here next month to examine the building and determine the next stage in the construction project, which was supposed to have been completed in 1984 and is already at least \$80 million over budget.

Reports from Washington sources have described the chancery, built jointly by American and Soviet workers, as riddled with eavesdropping devices and flawed by construction defects. Although the red brick and other materials for the exterior came from the United States, much of the struc-

ture's interior was provided here, including the precast reinforced bar concrete used for the foundation and the floors.

Low-quality materials and bureaucratic delays have plagued the project. According to reports, the concrete and even the steel beams have been implanted with sophisticated Soviet microphones. Although all embassies here assume they are bugged, some—the Swedish, for instance—have chosen to make it a public issue in dealings with Moscow.

American diplomats and their families have already moved into the living quarters inside the new embassy complex, which features townhouses for ranking officers and a recreational building housing a swimming pool, squash and basketball courts.

But the completion of the office building next door is uncertain. "The issue of the completion date is very sensitive right now," said one U.S. official.

As the story about the marines' security violations breaks in Washington, the embassy, normally tight-lipped, has taken caution to new heights. "We normally don't comment on security issues, and we certainly aren't going to now," said one spokesman.

Many here first heard the news of the marine scandal on Voice of America. Privately, people are swapping recollections about the people involved.

According to a spokesman for the Irish Embassy, Seina was transferred there early last year by the Soviet agency that supplies personnel for all foreigners in Moscow. She left their employment in February, said the spokesman, who noted that the Irish government is convinced its security was not breached.

Life for American diplomats in Moscow has never been easy. The new embassy compound, surrounded by a red wall and militiamen's booths, is a testament to the mutual suspicion between American and Soviet authorities.

American vulnerability to Soviet intelligence probes was dramatized in August 1985 when it was revealed that the KGB, or secret ser-

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vice, was sprinkling a fine powder, virtually invisible, on cars, door-knobs and clothing of diplomats to track their movements and contacts.

The public announcement caused alarm among the American community, particularly mothers and pregnant women.

The "spy dust" scare eventually blew over when chemical analysis showed that nitro phenyl pentadiene, one of the chemicals in the powder, did not pose a health risk, as had been feared.

Since the spy dust affair, other reports of Soviet spy efforts have surfaced—including one about microphones placed in typewriters. Staff members have also been accused of security lapses, including the handling of a letter from a Soviet citizen passed to the embassy by Nicholas Daniloff, former Moscow correspondent for U.S. News and World Report. The letter was later used against him when he was arrested by the Soviets on spying charges.

The defection to the Soviet union last August of one-time CIA agent Edward Lee Howard was seen as damaging to intelligence operations at the embassy since it was assumed that Howard, originally destined to come here on a tour of duty, had given the Soviets information on CIA contacts, one of whom was executed.

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